

interface cable; and, a mailing base connected to the digital input/output card by an interface cable. The mailing base can be of a kind that is remotely tripped by a mail piece passage; such bases are known and are developed and marketed by Pitney Bowes Inc. of Stamford, Conn., who is the assignee 5 of the present invention. The cited meter linking device allows a host data processing system to remotely control the postage meter, or known devices such as parcel registers, scales, or mailing machines. An example of a meter linking device is MeterLink which is developed and marketed by 10 Pitney Bowes Inc. of Stamford, Conn., who is the assignee of the present disclosed invention.

Further variations of the subject invention include: the number and configuration of nodes available in the system; the system's ability to utilize default settings for any of the 15 configuration parameters; the interconnection of memory 20, or of modem 22, to microprocessor 12 can be accomplished effectively in any of several embodiments that include: hardwiring, plug-in/plug-out interconnection, or operative interconnection through more than one element; 20 the types of microprocessors available for data processing; the range of printer types available for print production; and, the range of media available for printing.

What is claimed is:

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1. A method of defining and producing a finished mail piece, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) selecting at a first node, a plurality of characteristics which together define a mailing;
 - (b) creating a document and storing said document in electronic form; then directing that said stored document be included in a print job comprising said mailing;
 - (c) creating an address list comprising one or more destination addresses and storing said address list in electronic form and then selecting said stored address list for inclusion in said print job;
 - (d) transmitting said print job to a terminal node wherein said terminal node is not co-located with, nor under the control of, said first node;
 - (e) receiving said print job at said terminal node; said terminal node for receiving said print job and for directing said print job to a mail production means for producing said mail piece; said mail production means further comprising:
 - (i) a first printer; and
 - (ii) a second printer;
 - (f) printing on said first printer said destination address to an envelope wherein each of said destination addresses is printed to a corresponding envelope;
 - (g) printing on said second printer said document, wherein said document is printed in accordance with characteristics selected at said first node;
 - (h) inserting said printed document into said printed envelope to form an unfinished mail piece;
 - (i) sealing said unfinished mail piece;
 - (j) franking said unfinished mail piece, in accordance with characteristics selected at said first node and with characteristics determined at said second node, in order to form a finished mail piece; and
 - (k) placing said finished mail piece into a mail stream for delivery to said destination address printed thereon.
 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said plurality of characteristics comprises:
 - (a) a choice of paper, said choice further comprising:
 - (i) a choice of ink color;

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(h) franking means for franking said unfinished mail piece to form a finished mail piece.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein said second data processing means, said second printer means, said inserter means, said sealing means, and said franking means comprise a single apparatus.

18. The system of claim 15, wherein said system further comprises a plurality of nodes wherein one node is an initiating node and a second node is a terminal node; and, if there are more than two nodes in said system, then said first and said second printer means are located at said terminal node.

20. A method of defining and

steps of:

plurality of characteristics which define

creating a document and storing

creating an address list

addresses and storing said address list

in electronic form;

address list and said characteristics to a

terminal node wherein said terminal

node is not co-located with, nor under

the control of, said first node;

1. The first part of the document is a list of references. The references are listed in two columns. The first column contains references to books and articles, and the second column contains references to books and articles. The references are listed in alphabetical order.

receiving said document, said
address list and said characteristics at
said terminal node and directing said
document, said address list and said
characteristics to a mail production
means;

printing each of said destination
addresses to a corresponding envelope;

printing said document in
accordance with one or more of said
characteristics selected at said first
node;

inserting said printed document
into a corresponding printed envelope to
form the mail piece; and

placing the mail piece into a mail
stream for delivery to said destination
address printed thereon.

21. A method according to claim 20, further comprising providing the mail piece with evidence of postage payment in accordance with one or

more of said characteristics selected at
said first note.

22. A method according to claim 20, wherein said printed envelope is provided with evidence of postage payment.

23. A method according to claim 22, wherein said postage payment is in accordance with one or more of said characteristics selected at said first node.

24. A method according to claim 20, further comprising sealing said corresponding printed envelope after said inserting step.

25. A method according to claim 24, further comprising providing the mail piece with evidence of postage payment in accordance with one or

more of said characteristics selected at
said first node.

26. A method according to claim 24, wherein said printed envelope is provided with evidence of postage payment.

27. A method according to claim 26, wherein said postage payment is in accordance with one or more of said characteristics selected at said first node.

28. A method according to claim 20, wherein said document, said address list and said characteristics are transmitted independent of one another.

29. A method according to claim 20, wherein said document, said address list and said characteristics are transmitted concurrently.

30. A method according to claim 20, wherein said plurality of characteristics selected at said first node comprise paper size and whether printing should be on one or both sides of a page.

claim 20, wherein said plurality of characteristics selected at said first node comprise paper size and whether printing should be on one or both sides of a page.

31. A method according to claim 30, wherein said plurality of characteristics selected at said first node further comprise paper color.

claim 30, wherein said plurality of
characteristics selected at said first
node further comprise paper color.

32. A method according to
claim 20, wherein said plurality of
characteristics selected at said first
node comprise a class of postage for
the mail piece.

claim 20, wherein said plurality of characteristics selected at said first node comprise a class of postage for the mail piece.

33. A method according to claim 20, wherein said plurality of characteristics selected at said first node comprise whether a reply

claim 20, wherein said plurality of
characteristics selected at said first
node comprise whether a reply

envelope is to be included in the
mailpiece.

34. A method according to claim 20, further comprising verifying at said terminal node each of said destination addresses comprising said address list.

35. A method according to claim 34, wherein said verifying step comprises comparing each of said destination addresses to a corresponding correct address in a database containing correct addresses.

36. A method according to claim 35, wherein one or more of said destination addresses are standardized to match the corresponding correct address contained in said database.

37. A method according to
claim 20, wherein said terminal node
provides an indication to said first node
that said mail piece has been placed
into the mail stream for delivery.

claim 20, wherein said terminal node
provides an indication to said first node
that said mail piece has been placed
into the mail stream for delivery.

provides an indication to said first node
that said mail piece has been placed

that said mail piece has been placed

into the mail stream for delivery.

38. A system for producing a
mail piece, comprising:

38. A system for producing a

mail piece, comprising:

first data processing

means for selecting a document,

selecting an address list including one

or more destination addresses, and

selecting a plurality of characteristics

which define a mailing:

second / data processing

means for receiving/said selected

document, address list and

characteristics and directing said

selected document, address list and

characteristics to a mail production

means, wherein said second data

processing/means is not co-located

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with, nor under the control of, said first
data processing means:

said mail production

means comprising means for printing
said selected document in accordance
with one or more of said selected
characteristics, means for printing each
of said destination addresses to a
corresponding envelope, and means for
inserting said printed document into a
corresponding printed envelope.

39. A system according to claim 38, said mail production means further comprising means for sealing the corresponding printed envelope.

40. A system according to 38,
said mail production means further
comprising means for providing the
corresponding printed envelope with
evidence of postage payment in

accordance with one or more of said
selected characteristics.

41. A system according to claim 38, wherein said corresponding printed envelope is provided with evidence of postage payment.

42. A system according to
claim 41, wherein said postage payment
is in accordance with one or more of
said selected characteristics.

43. A system according to
claim 38, wherein said document and
said address list are stored in electronic
form.

44. A system according to claim 38, wherein said second data processing means comprises means for verifying each of said destination addresses included in said address list.

45. A system according to

claim 44, wherein said means for

verifying compares each of said

destination addresses to a

corresponding correct address in a

database containing correct addresses.

46. A system according to

claim 45, wherein said means for

verifying standardizes one or more of

said destination addresses to match the

corresponding correct address

contained in said database.

47. A system according to

claim 38, wherein said second data

processing means provides an

indication to said first data processing

means that said mail piece has been

placed into a mail stream for delivery.

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